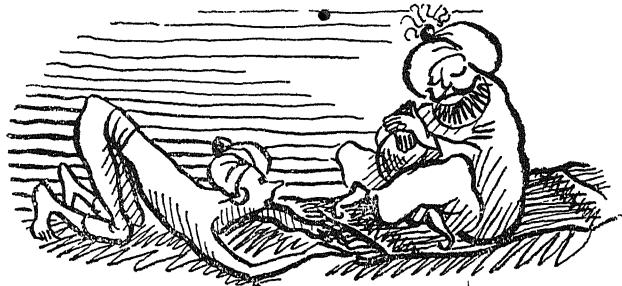


STUFF AND NONSENSE

by

Walter de la Mare



with illustrations by Margaret Wolpe

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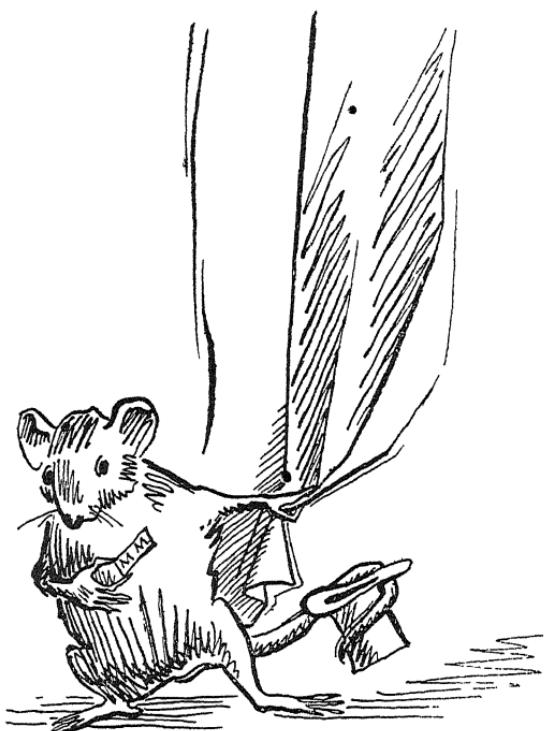
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STUFF AND NONSENSE



THE MOUSE

In snug little house
Which I shared with my Fanny,
Lived a mite of a mouse,
And we called it Magnani.

MOONSHINE

There was a young lady of Rheims,
There was an old poet of Gizeh,
He rhymed on the deepest and sweetest of themes,
She scorned all his efforts to please her
And he sighed, "Ah, I see,
She and sense won't agree "
So he scribbled her moonshine, mere moonshine, and
she,
With jubilant screams, packed her trunk up in Rheims,
Cried aloud, "I am coming, O Bard of my dreams!"
And was clasped to his bosom in Gizeh.

THE BONNET

There was a young man in a hat,
And by went Miss B in a bonnet,
When he saw her, he smiled at the lat-
ter: ay, and the roses upon it
But when, by and by—
As blue as the sky—
He detected her eye
'Neath its brim, well, oh my!
He wished that fair cheek was well under his h t
And his own half-concealed in her bonnet.

THE TULIP

There was an old Begum of Frome,
There was an old Yogi of Leicester,
She sent him a tulip in bloom,
He rolled his black eyes and he blessed h r.

How replete with delight
Is a flower to the sight!

It brightens the day and it sweetens the ight.
Oh! if all the old ladies grew tulips in From ,
How h ppy the Yogis in Leicester!



A PAIR

There's a stealthy old gaffer named Time;
There's a nimble rapscallion called Cupid,
They have often been put into rhyme
By poets one should not call stupid

Yet never shâll Man,
Ponder deep as he can,

Get the hang of that hour-glassed old younker named
Time,

Who mows down the lovely from Compline to Prime,
And at work must have been before loving began,
Who yet by this amorous fledgling is dupèd—
A sly, blindfold rascal (with arrows) called Cupid

DEAR SIR

There was an old Rabbi of Ur,
He loved a Miss Beaulieu
She sent him a letter "Dear Sir . . ."
Then a stone-cold "Yours truly."

Now what she could mean
By the dots in between
Is not plain to be seen

We can but infer the Rabbi of Ur
Enquired of Miss Beaulieu

THE DUET

There was a young lady of Tring,
There was an old fellow of Kello,
And she—she did nothing but sing,
And he—he did nothing but bellow.

Now I think (and don't you?)
That the best thing to do
Were to marry these two

Then maybe the one would sing no more in Tring,
Or the other not bellow in Kello



THE RUBY

Ther was an old Bhoojah of Ghât,
Who wore a prodigious great Ruby—
“Out of sight,” it is said, “when he sat ”
But how can this possibly true be?

I've pondered and pondered, and sometimes have felt
That the gem in discussion reposed in his belt,
For 'tis there if sheer sitting has made one too fat,
And—being a Bhoojah—one sits on a mat,
There *might* bl ze unseen a great Ruby.



MISS PHEASANT

There was an old man with a gun,
Who espied an old lady named Pheasant;
She sat on a seat in the sun,
And he stared, and he stared; most unple sant!
 But at last, drawing near,
 He made it quite clear

Th t he had no *intention* so rude to appear,
But was merely confused, being out with his gun,
At espying a lady named Pheasant

HOPPING

There was an old widow of Wapping;
There is a sweet pretty country in Kent:
She heard that her friends had gone hopping,
And thought she'd go too So she went.

Now this simple old dear,
Who was sixty—and plump,
Thought a hop, it is clear,
Is a one-leggèd jump;
And thus she progressed—*hop-hop-hop-hop*—throu h
 Wapping,
On—on—i to sweet pr tty Kent.

DUSK

There was an old person named Fish
Who descried in the twilight a Finn,
Then the eyesight's not all one could wish,
And the shadows of nightfall begin
His greeting was frigid He said, "I declare
Such fractions are vulgar Yes, quite I don't care
To perceive mere excrescences taking the air,
Whether dorsal, or ventral, or caudal So there!"
Let a stark monosyllable serve, namely, Pish!"
Said that peevish, self-centred old person named Fish
Who'd descried in the twilight a Finn



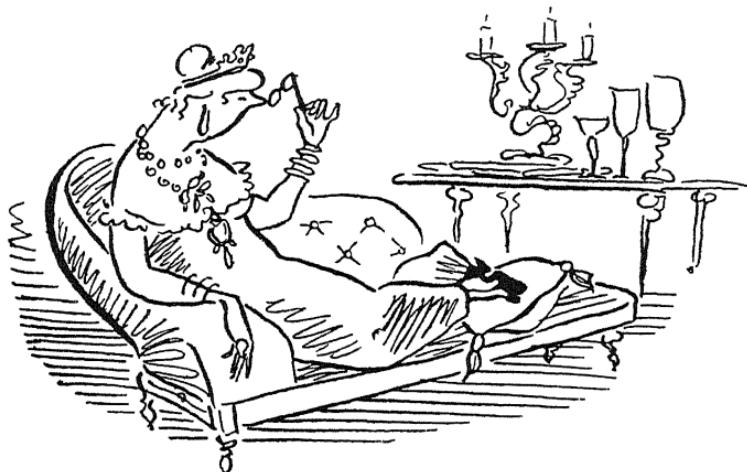
GREEN

There was an old grocer of Goring
H d a butter assistant named Green,
Who sank through a hole in the flooring
And never was afterwards seen .
Did he look in his cellar?
Did he miss the poor fellow?
Not at all Quite phlegmatic,
He retired to an attic,
And there watched the moon in her glory o'er Goring—
A sight not infrequently seen



THE LADY McTAGGART

The Lady McTaggart preferred to recline
(Not to sit on a chair) when she went out to dine,
And, if she approved of the victuals, she would,
When she sank on the sofa, sigh, "So far, so good "



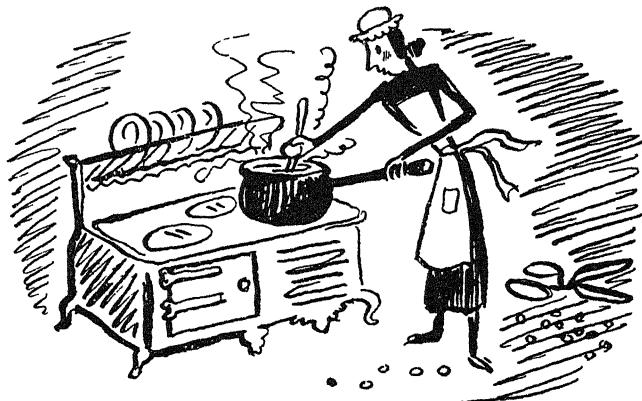
J. J.

There was an old vicar of Sinder
Had sexton n med Jeremy Jones,
He'd watch him from out of his winder—
And smile at him digging up bones,
Then, hid in a curtain,
To make sound uncertain,
He'd holl , "Hello, there! OLD JONES! J Jones'"
And Jones, like an owl,
Would peer o'er his showl,
A d wonder from which of his old friends in Sind r
H d burst out that muffled, " Old Jones'"

BUTTONS

There was an old skinflint of Hitching
Had a cook, Mrs. Casey, of Cork,
There was nothing but crusts in the kitchen,
While in parlour was sherry and pork.

So at last, Mrs. Casey, her pangs to assuage,
Having snipped off his buttonses, curried the p ;
And now, while that skinflint gulps sherry and pork.
In his parlour adjacent to Hitching,
To the tune blithe and merry of knife and of fork,
Anthropophagy reigns in the kitchen.



MEAT

From out his red and sawdust shop
This butcher, born to chepe and chop,
Surveys without a trace of grief
Perambulating tombs of beef,
From an unmoved and pale-blue eye,
He gloats on these sarcophagi—
Whether they're walking or riding in 'busses
He gloats on these sarcophaguses,
And as he gloats (with greedy eye)
He says, "Buy! Buy! Buy! Buy! Buy! Buy!"



It's probable we never shall
Convince him that an animal
Is not mere layers of lean and fat,
He may have butched too much for that

But still, some day we may be able
To wean him to the vegetable
Turnip, potato, parsnip, swede—
If only upon these he 'd feed,
One beast the fewer then might bleed,
He'd be less butcherous than of yore
And help the greengrocer next door

FISH

In June it must be very nice
To bask about a block of ice—
And watch the World go broiling by
Under a hot and windless sky,
Then turn aside, and, sniffing, see
Perennial mounds of shrimps for tea,
How genial, too, when fancying dab,
To slip one from one's marble slab,
Or, when the stars begin to twinkle,
To broach an unofficial winkle,
Or to descend in morning slipper
And not to have to *buy* a kipper.
This must be very pleasant, and
As pleasant, too, to understand,
When you have cod—are dining off it—
You're only eating so much profit
. Solacing thoughts like these must stir
The musings of the Fishmonger.

IRON

It is the gentle poet's art
In pleasing diction to impart
 Whatever he thinks meet
And even make the ugly bloom
 In splendour at our feet
But neither Shelley, Keats nor Byron
Sang songs on Zinc, or odes to Iron:
 Impracticable feat!

When passing, then, I always bow
To him who makes (I know not how)
A living out of nails, pans, pails—
 I bow across the street—
Just bow and then my courage fails
 I beat a swift retreat

For who can help but ponder on
His awful state when, Sunday gone,
 At daybreak bleak and chill,
He turns the shop-key in its lock,
Stares in upon his ghastly stock,
 And opens Monday's till.

THE BARDS

My aged friend, Miss Wilkinson,
Whose mother was a Lambe,
Saw Wordsworth once, and Coleridge, too,
One morning in her p'ram*.

Birdlike the bards stooped over her—
Like fledgling in a nest,
And Wordsworth said, “Thou harmless b' be!”
And Coleridge was impressed.

The pretty thing gazed up and smiled,
And softly murmured, “Coo!”
William was then aged sixty-four
And Samuel sixty-two.

* This was a three-wheeled vehicle
Of iron and of wood,
It had a leather apron,
ut it hadn't any hood



THE TANK

“If I had a little money,” mused the Reverend Philip Fish,
“And could buy (without a scruple) any little thing I
 wish,
I would purchase an Aquarium, some moss and ferns and
 sand,
Some pretty shining pebbles, branching coral, sea-shells,
 and
At centre, a small cistern—made of glass—and placed,
 well, *so*
 And filled with what in France is known as *eau*



“It’s really very singular, as soon as I’m asleep,
My dreams at once commit me to the wonders of the
 deep,
I wallow with the whale, or in profundities obscure
Disport with shapes no waking eye for terror could
 endure

At times I am an octopus; at times I am a sprat;
And there *is* a lot of ocean for a little fish like that!

“I had an uncle—Phineas Fish, but now that he’s
deceased

All hope of a small legacy has practically ceased.

But if a rich parishioner should tactfully suggest,

“Now, tell me, Father Fish, what little present you’d lik
best,”

Although I wouldn’t *think* of it—could only smile my
thanks,

I’m *sure*, you know, my thoughts would turn to
tanks!”

BISHOP WINTERBOURNE

The Reverend William Winterbourne,
When walking in the Mall,
Tired of genteel pedestrians,
Much yearned to meet a *pal*,
Or, failing an old crony,
His best gal.

Beelzebub decoyed that wish up.
The Reverend William’s now a bishop.
Now, when he fares down Piccadilly,
His blameless Conscience—willy-nilly—
So *rchepiscopally* staid is,
He never gives a thought to ladies.
Heedless of impious scrutinies
The curious fix on all D.D.’s,

His gaiters 'neath his apron wend;
His steps in one direction bend;
His heart, as right as reverend,
Has for desire one only end—

To wit, to join the wild *Te De m*
That echoes through the Athenaeum.

THE BUN

The muffin and the crumpet are
When adequately done
A dish to make a curate wish
To excel in feats of fun;
A Canon booms, 'tis said, when fed
On toasted Sallie Lunn,
E'en Deans, I ween, plum cake being seen,
Have been observed to run
But, Ah! a Bishop come to tea!
He takes the Bun

HYSSOP

Said Judge Jessop,
“The hyssop
You think’s in your wall
Correctly
And strictly
Isn’t hyssop at all.”
“Isn’t hyssop?” says I;
“Isn’t hyssop,” says he;
“By no means—not hyssop at all.”

“If my hyssop,
Judge Jessop,
Isn’t hyssop at all,
Tell me truly
And duly
Why it grows on my wall!”
“Why it grows on?” says he.
“Yes, it grows on,” says I,
“Why it grows and it grows on my wall.”

“On the Bisop”,
Said Judge Jessop,
“(With the h out), we’ll call,
And straitly,
Sedately,
We’ll resort to your wall.”
“With a ladder?” says I,
“With ladder,” says he,
“And we’ll ask him—‘What’s that in the wall?’ ”

So the Bisop,
Judge Jessop
And me—three in all—
Hell and leather
Together
Climbed up on my wall.
“What’s that there?” says I.
“What’s what where?” says he,
“Why, house-leek,” said the Bisop. That’s all.



MISS CLEGG

Miss Clegg was accustomed to do as she wished,
Upon Fate she was never a waiter,
And whenever she came upon water she fished,
And always attired in a garter.

The word has a singular look, I agree,
Yet is apt in the case of Miss Clegg,
Since from birth she a monopode happened to be,
And you can't wear a pair on one leg

Her foot was her basis then, while with her float
She dangled a worm 'neath a willow,
Or, far out to sea, stood erect in a boat,
And awaited a bite from the bellow.

THE MONSTER

There was an Old Man with a net
He heard of a Fish in the sea.
He sighed, "It is strange I forget
The spot where the monster should be."
But ev'n as he yearned,
His back being turned,
The leisurely Behemoth swam up behind
In a manner by no means ostensibly kind,
And not pausing to gloat
Neatly swallowed his boat—

Its oars and its rowlocks (the whole of the set),
The Old Man in his sea-boots,
 Sou'-wester, and net,
Leaving nothing at all, to be viewed with regret,
No touching memento t which one might fret—
 No. Nothing at all· merely Sea.



THE LADY GODIVA

The Lady Godiva Godolphin, of a blood by the century's
blued,

Flowing back, I believe,
To Adam and Eve,
Had a rooted disdain of the *nood*.

“Sheep are clad”, she would cry, “in their woollies; the
buffalo's hirsute, though rude,
Apart from their tails,
Even flounders have scales,
Not a shrimp in the ocean swims *nood*

“The ruff has ruff, though a ruff's not enough; the s - -
lion, I'm told, has a hood;
The lobster a back,
It's an effort to crack,
And the zebra with stripes is imbrued.

“The oyster is shelled, and the goat has a coat, whether
wild, or domestic or Zoo'ed.
From a bee to a bear—
You can look, you can stare—
But in nature no creature is *nood*.”

Pelisses and petticoats, tippets and jupes, she wore
by the gross (when she could),
She would ride in her gig
In nine fronts and three wig,
And smile when the little boys boo'ed.

Her tables and chairs and her bedsteads—lest even their
toes should obtrude—

She sewed up in chintz
Trimmed with calico, since,
Thus upholstered, they couldn't look nood



The Cherubs, that graced the Godolphins, at rest in the
Church of St. Jude,

She s id, looked less bloated,
When trousered and coated,
And at ll events none remained nood

Wh n her bath-tub was brought by a handmaid (who t
no time desired to intrude),

She would paddle, splash, plunge—
In sark made of sponge,
And not, as do most of us, nood.

Now it's whispered the Lady Godiva was the least little
bit of a prude,
I really can't say,
She long since passed away,
And what matter if nobody knoowed?

AN IDLE WORD

I used to wear a diamond ring,
A small but valuable thing,
A souvenir of how and when
I had succeeded up till then
I used to wear it day and night.
I polished it to keep it bright.
I never took it off I'd sit
For hours at home and look at it
For years and years I'd had to wait
To make it mine It kept me straight.

When, too, in shops I've sat at tea,
People would stare at it, and me—
Not knowing *who* I might not be.
I'd just call, "Miss!"—the waitress would
Scamper to bring me drink and food.
Then with my hand I'd smooth my hair,
Knowing my diamond safely there

Often, when walking in the street,
"Aha!" I've thought (the thought was sweet),
"They little guess what's lying hid
"Beneath this glove!" (of suède or kid)

If only I'd been let alone,
I'd have stayed happy with that stone.
But no In this world there are them
Who envy even a gem.

One day I heard a lady say—
And as she spoke, she looked my way:
"A diamond is a vulgar thing
To see corusking in ring;
And, like as not, as I've been told,
They're only glass—in brass not gold."

I rose I felt, without a doubt,
My very life-blood trickling out
I sold the ring, at awful loss,
To one I knew named Isaac Moss.
And now in life no hope I see,
Its bottom's fallen out for me

My situation's gone, I owe
Not less than twenty pounds or so;
Outside a Public House I stand,
With loafers upon either hand;
And if a Constable draws near,
My skin goes cold and stiff with fear,
He knows I know he's but to wait
And some dark cell will be my fate.

It only proves—what good men tell—
We should be cautious in our speech.

If that proud lady had not said
My diamond of glass w' s made,
Should I be drifting in my prime
Into a *cul-de-sac* of crime?
One heedless, scoffing word—and see!
What the old vixen's done for me!



HORSES

I never see a coach go by
Without remembering that I
Shall some day take a ride in one
With horses not allowed to run
They'll step on leisurely to where
A hole gapes in the open air,
Then turn and look, to see if they
May now enjoy a munch of hay,
Or any other kind of meal

It's odd how little horses feel
Half their delight on earth one knows is
To have us humans pat their noses
And when at last we go our way,
They don't so much as breathe a Nay,
But, if permitted, on will pass,
To graze upon our funeral grass.

BAH!

When I chanced to look over the wall in the glade—
I was taking a walk with Mamma—
I saw an old ewe sitting down in the shade,
And she opened her mouth and said, “Bah!”

That's always what happens when sheep I come near,
They watch me approach from afar,
And out of the turnips and clover I hear
A horrid ironical “Bah!”

What can I have done? I can't understand—
The cantankerous creatures they are!
I never throw stones, I hold dear Mamma's hand,
And I don't think they *ought* to say "Bah!"

ARCHERY

To place one's little boy—just *so*—
An apple on his head,
Then loose an arrow from one's bow
And not to shoot him dead.—

That is a feat requiring skill,
And confidence as well,
As any archer would have told
The man who tolled the bell

The luck must hold; the child stand still
This William befell,
But just how close was core to corse
Could only William tell

SAID JANE

Said Jane to the old Fisherman,
"I cannot understand
Why ever little fishes swim
So close up to the land;
If *I* knew of those horrid hooks
I'd keep away from *sand*."

That Fisherman, he scratched his head
('Twas sunset o'er the lea),
Then twisted of his quid, and said,
"What, missie, baffles *me*
Is why the little warmits keep
A sight too far to sea."

And there the problem must remain—
Beyond the wit of man—
As posited by little Jane
And by the Fisherman,
Leaving it still precisely as
When they their talk began.

THE WAIF

There lived a small hermaphrodite beside the silver
Brent,
A stream meandering not in maps of Surrey, Bucks, or
Kent;
Yet jealous elves from these sweet parts, this tiny mite to
vex,
Would tease, torment, and taunt, and call him, "Master
Middlesex!"

H lived on corns, dewdrops, cowslips, bilberries, and
snow—
A sm ll, shy, h ppy, tuneful thing, and innocent of woe;
Except when these malignant imps, his tenderness to vex,
Would te se, torment, and taunt, and call him, "Master
Middlese !"

He ran away; he went to sea; to far P ru he came
There where the Ataquipa flows and odorous cinchon
blows and no one knows his n me,
He nests now with the humming-bird that sips but never
pecks;
And silent slides the silver Brent, and mute is Middl s x.

THE SEA-NYMPH

There was an old mariner
Heard 'mid his dunes
A swallow-tailed sea-nymph
Descanting of tunes
Trill, grace-note, caden a,
And high in the treble,
She warbled as sweet
As a sea-nymph is able.



He hearkened, he pondered,
He said, "I'm aware
Of the strains of a sea-nymph
Seducing the air,
No doubt she sits combing
And sleeking her hair

"She sings like a linnet,
I assume she is fair,
And she *may* be supposing
That *I*'m lurking near!
But of music, I've little;
Of voice I have none;
I can merely applaud
When the aria is done."

So he sate on the dunes
By the fringe of the deep,
And, lulled by her warblings,
He fell fast asleep
When he woke, 'twas cold night
With huge stars overhead,
But all silent the sands
Of his barbarous bed

He sighed—oh, sighed softly
"My applause will come late,
For I see that the sea-nymph
Was unable to wait,
Still, good manners must not by
Inaction be sapped",
So he clap-clap-clap-clap-clap-
Clap-clap-clap-clap-clapped.

NO!

Full oft I've stood at winter dusk alone upon the strand,
Watching the breakers thundering in for leagues across
the sand,

And smiled up at my friend in heaven, the Moon, so pale
and wan,

Amused within that wise men say
'Tis she who, gliding on her way,
'Tis *She*—who leads them on'

No, no. And when at dead of dark—and that sweet orb's
at rest—

I muse for hours on Rigel, Deneb, Spica, and the rest
Of Night's clear candles gleaming there like glow-worms
in the grass,

I laugh aloud to think of those
Who, peering through a tube, suppose
They're pits of boiling gas!

Away with them! I dance and sing, but could not sing
at all,

Believing me mere matter on a rotatory Ball
Such horrid thoughts confuse my mind, they fill my soul
with woe;

But when in meadows green I stray,
Between the dawning and the day,
And hear the lark's shrill roundelay,
I *know* I *know* I *KNOW*.

OLD B.

To sit under a tree,
No humans near by,
And to gaze on and on, up, up, into the sky,
Was from breakfast to tea
The delight of old B.;
And sometimes he'd smile, or he'd sigh.

Yes, such w's his bent,
And it's just to declare
Quite apart from the fragrance and joy of fresh air,
If his days were so spent,
With a tree for a tent,
He may have found something of interest there:

A vagabond crow,
A lark o'er the lea,
A nest with its little birds, possibly three,
A voluminous cloud sailing off to the sea,
A balloon with its basket gone off on the spree:
Mere sky, as we know,
May stay blank as an O . . .

Still, no matter that There he's sit 'neath his tree;
And that's about all that is known of old B

ANN'S AUNT AND THE BEAR

It filled Ann's Aunt M *ri* with r *g*
To se *wild* thing in *c* *ge*.
At sight of cre *ture*, winged or furred,
Confined by b *rs*, by ch *ins* deterred,
She'd melt with pity. In word—
“Pore thing”, she'd cry, “you por , *pore* thing!”
At which the d *int* y de *r* would sin
A littl soft s *d* song, or che *p*,
Or turn curious y to peep
At her gre *t f* *ce*, *nd* brow, *nd* bo *t*—
Lik a cathedral perched upo *it*.

“Tw s just her kindly, friendly humour:
She'd grieve s much o'er lio or pum ,
And gloat upon their ke pers when
They chanced their he ds within its de .
“Pore thing!” she'd mutter Not “Poor M !”

One afternoon her aunt *nd* Ann
(Who'd gone to s e nursery-man
About le ky w tering c n),
As they were moving gently home,
On most horrid scene did com .
Two forei *rs* (with longish hair)
Wer le ding on ch in Be *r*,
A bushy, bright- yed, thirsty be st,
Who h d trudged score of miles tle st
In heat *nd* dust— tle st score,
And d nced perh ps s m ny more;
Y s, danced— *nd* growled—and danced a i
Whene'er th selon -h ired foreign m

Should in their cruelty think proper
To try and earn an English copper,
Or tuppence, even, if any dunce
Should want the dance danced more than once.

Yes, there, beneath a chestnut's shade,
This parched-up beast was being made
To caper and to growl a noise
To please a pack of errand boys,
It danced and gruffed, it breathed vast sighs,
Its half-bald head a maze of flies,
Its claws went tic-tac in the dust,
And still it danced, for dance it must;
While the two Frogs in hope of gain
Stood grinning by and tweaked its chain.

When Ann, and Ann's aunt, Aunt Maria,
She said, "Pore thing! you pore, pore thing!"
And then she raised a stout umbrella,
And *turned* upon the nearest fellow
French or Italian, Greek or Dutch,
She simply couldn't thwack too much,
Sound thumping thumps she laid full many on,
Then up and smote his dazed companion

And there you see kind Aunt Mari',
Her bugled bonnet all awry,
And plump cheek flushed with her exertions
Against these parasitic Persians,
While Ann, now lost in rapture, stands
Clapping her little mitten hands,
And butcher's, baker's, grocer's boy
Yell out their rude barbaric joy.

Alack! what evil chance we find!
Her wrath made Aunt Maria blind:
In compassing his tyrants' ruin,
She didn't notice their poor Bruin,
Who, having wriggled off his muzzle,
Was shuffling in to join the tussle,
And, rather giddy in the head,
In gratitude for what she had said,



And done to that cruel Bruin-baster,
Went sidling up, and then—embraced her!

It's sad indeed to have to tell
What then this kind, kind soul befell—
Ann's Aunt Maria. So sharp B's squeeze
Ann hadn't time to whisper, "Please,
You're cuddling my dear aunt so close
You must be treading on her toes,
I cannot even see her nose!"

And when at length the Bear had show
That gratitude goes to the bone,
Nothing the caitiffs then could do
Would bring his cold protectress to.
They could but rub their hands They s id,
"We 'ave ze fear, ze ladie's dead'
She do not breathe, nor any ting,
Por zing, pore zing—ze pore, *pore* zing!"

'Tis said all clouds are silver-lined,
This one small fact then keep in mind:
Had quite, quite base been either m n,
They might have fed the Bear on Ann.

THE WARMINT

Oh, she was just a little thing,
A slim thing, a narrow thing,
A pig-tailed, dark and black-eyed thing,
Not five span
She didn't care a fig, a fig,
For any creature, small or big,
Gander, turkey, cow, or pig,
Woman or man.
She set papa a booby-trap,
It tumbled on his head,
She dived into the water-butt;
Lit fireworks in the shed;
The bed they call an apple-pie
She made poor cook for Sunday,
Played with the bunnies under the moon
Through half the night to Monday.
Oh, she was just a little thing,

A starry, dark, mischievous thing,
An imp of mischief, out and in,
 A terror, tax and torment
Mamma called her her precious lamb;
Cook cooked her custards, tarts and flam;
The gardener, whose name was Sam,
Wild str wberries grew to make her jam;
The nurse who wheeled her in her pram,
 And stitched her many a garment,
No peace a moment ever knew;
And yet they loved her through and through—
 This wicked little warmint

THE EVENING

Happy was Edward in the love
 Of beauteous Esmeralda;
And one fair evening in a grove
 His ownest own he call'd her.

Upon his meek and manly breast
 She hid her eyes cerule n,
While modesty her cheek expressed
 Like some small shy ch meleon.

But ah! a P ther spies them there,
 Deep-tr nced in speechless r pture;
H gloats on such inviting fare,
 How easy too, to capture.

Supple nd gay, h sleeks his w y,
 And—gollops up poor Edward.
“Oh, Es eralda, shun del y,
 And h sten quickly bedward!”

Alas' she lingers; and too long
A pounce, a far, faint squealin',
The young and fair are now the strong,
And much refresh't's the feline



ERGO

There was an old man said, "I am.
And therefore, O rapture! I think!"
They retorted, "H'm, h'm?" and "H'm, h'm!"
And each at the rest winked a wink

Yet it may be, you know,
That he *fancied* it so—
That he'd taken to heart
The words of Descartes,

Who, hoping and hoping for *something* to come,
At last had exclaimed, "*Cogito, ergo sum*"
Yes, it may be he had not intended a cram,
Or to give an occasion to wink,
When he piped up in ecstasy, "Neighbours, I am:
And therefore I think!"

VERY

There was a young lady of Bow,
A dandy there was, too, of Derry,
"How sweetly the hawthorn trees blow!"
He murmured. And she replied, "Very"

Then she glanced, and she smiled,
And she tapped with her shoe,
Then slid her eyes sidelong,
And both were pure blue,
And the longer the silence,
The deeper it grew:
Till he said, "If 'twere kissing,
I'd like to kiss *you*.

Would it be very naughty to do—well—just—so?"
She thought him a goose, yet she didn't cry, "Bo!"
But blushed, tittered, sighed, and said, "Very!"

TOBAGO

There was an old man with delight
Heard his father was born in Tobago,
For now it seemed perfectly proper and right
He should be such a prey to lumbago

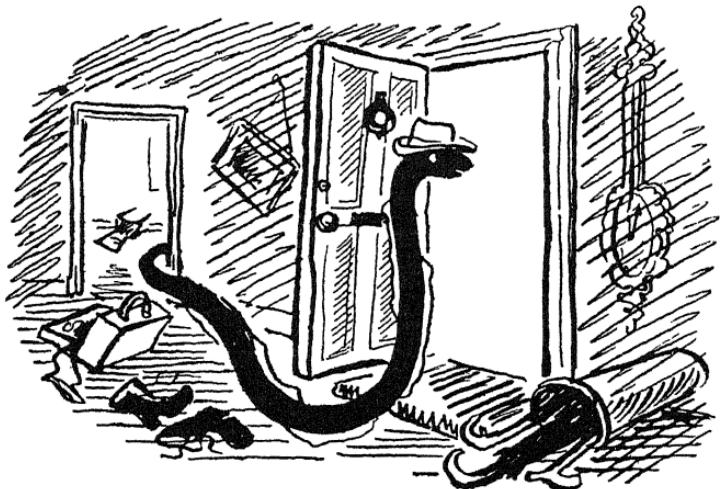
The old gentleman, too,
Had been known to complain—
In terms, some might think,
Too extreme—of the pain

To hear, then—we won't say, the reason—but rhyme,
For this state of affairs was a triumph sublime
He looked at his sire with the utmost delight,

And wrote a long ode to Tobago.

THE EEL

There was an old person of Dover
Who called on his sister in Deal,
With a sack hanging over his shoulder
In which was a whopping great eel
It leapt down the stairs, scuttled upstairs
It golloped up bolsters and wash-jugs and chairs,
Her boots, shoes, and slippers, in singles and pairs;
And alas! when this Ogre
Had finished its meal,
There was no one of Dover
With a sister in Deal.



THE BLACKBIRDS

There was an old man, in reproof
Of the blackbirds hob-nob in his cherries,
Cried “Be off now, you rascals, be off!”
But the rogues never stirred from the berries.

They knew that his wits
Were a little astray;
They knew on old fogeys it’s
Easy to prey.

So they merely sang sweeter to drown his reproof,
And the louder he called at them, “Rascals be off!”
The merrier they in his cherries.

THE PENNY

A person of Abergavenny
Met an old man from Bromley-by-Bow,
He said, “Would you lend me a penny?”
And she, she replied, “I don’t know”.

Now strangers are dangerous, that we agree;
And with money in public best not be too free.
Still, perchance ’twere less caustic to say, “Well, I’ll see”,
Than that vague “I don’t know”,
When asked for a penny in Abergavenny
By an old man from Bromley-by-Bow.

FRECKLES

There was a young lady of Beccles,
Who had a twin sister in Crete,
She was dappled all over with freckles,
From her top-knot right down to her feet,
For round about Gnossos the sun is so hot
One sits in a torpor, complexion forgot,
And basks in the bountiful heat.
Now the Beccles young damosel, being a twin,
Soon reflected the state her poor sister was in,
Though never a word came from Crete,
But she being taller,
The freckles were smaller,
And stopped inches short of her feet.



THE FLY

There was once an old parson named Next
Saw a fly in his pulpit
The instant he gave out his text
He detected the culprit

It winged up and up, paused to stare in his eye,
Betwixt neck and neck-band proceeded to pry,
It traversed his sermon on six tufted toes,
Buzzed up in his face and then perched on his nose.
Expelled from this organ, it made a swift pass
To sip of the water that stood in his glass,
Lost its balance—fell in O, alas and alas!

And he? Parson Next?
Distressed and perplexed,
He stooped in his pulpit—
He just couldn't help it—
And proceeded to gulp it.

Yes, insect and all, and disposed of the culprit
So if ever kind Fate should a see for him dish up,
It may, in due season, reside in a Bishop.

KANT

There was an old Lawyer of Diss,
There was an old Doctor of Bicester;
They argued, if *that* there is *This*,
Then the 'Thing-in-Itself is a twister.

When an aged old aunt,
Of philosophy scant,
Said such talk was all cant

Then her nephews indulged in contortions of bliss,
And one of 'em up, and—yes, kissed her.

WOOL

There was an old lady of Poole
Who called at a mercer's in Whitting,
And ordered £10 worth of wool,
When 'twas *weight* she required—for her knitting.

Now her nephews and nieces
Look like sheep in their fleeces,
Their feet sound like trotters,
When out with their mothers,
When they're drinking and eating,
Their talk is all bleating,

And many a glutton has thought of boiled mutton
When watching their capers in school.



THE SHUBBLE

There was an old man said, “I fe r
That life, my dear friends, is a bubble,
Still, with all due respect to a Philistine ear,
A limerick’s best when it’s double”.
When they said, “But the waste
Of time, temper, taste!”
He gulped down his ink with cantankerous haste,
And chopped off his head with a shubble.



VENDETTA

An enemy of Dr Drake's,
Who, after many worse mistakes,
Prescribed him tar for stomach-aches,
 Bought four-and-twenty duck
 Stowed in a sack
 On the carrier's back,
He crept next door to a tumbledown shack
 And dumped them in the muck.

They turned the doctor's head, they did,
He often now saw red, he did,
 Ev'n fees became a tax
"That Dr Drake," his patients said,
"There's word he's taken to his bed,
No doubt he'll very soon be dead,
 He can't endure their *Quack* (s)!"



MEDDLING

Says James to his second cousin, he says,
 “Fair mystery, John, it be,
Where them that thinks get the thoughts they thinks—
 What they calls philosophhee,
I sits on these sands for days at a stretch,
 Staring out at the deep blue Sea,
But, pickle me, Coz, if a glim there comes
 Of the thoughts what they thinks to *me*”.

Says John, nodding solemn, “There’s men and there’s men,
 And there’s some keeps their minds on the latch;
But if ever you pines for to fish down deep,
 It’s got to be done when you’re half asleep,
 And with tackle and hook to match
And I warn you, J mes, when you gets a bite,
 It’s turrible things you’ll catch;

“Fishes with goggle eyes, fishes with wings,
Fishes with beards and electric stings,
Shapeless, elastic and jellified things,
 No Christian could despatch.

“What’s worse,” says he, “and I’ve seed it in books
 On *most* peculiar themes,
If you hankers to know wh t a villain you are,
 Keep a werry sharp eye on your dreams
Look t ‘em close, James, and you’ll find
You’ve got a fair horrible sink of a mind,
 Like a bog in a fog that steams

“But never no good come of meddling, James.

There's things as is *hud*, I say.

Take it or leave it, then, just as you please,
There's nothing what's round us here—he's or she's—
But lives on a soo-per-fish-i-es,

And there I intend to stay ”

THE ACCOMPANIMENT

The man in the hat (whom you see in the picture)

Mused softly one evening: “I sit in this copse,
And the birds warble sweetly, for sweet is their nature,
Yet they sing at h phazard, then every one stops.

“Yes, as if at the lift of a baton or finger,

The love-notes, *p -wees*, and *to-witta-woos* cease,
Not a pause for applause, not a wing seems to linger,
The forests fall mute—the whole world is at peace

“I marvel. I marvel. For take, now, the linnet—

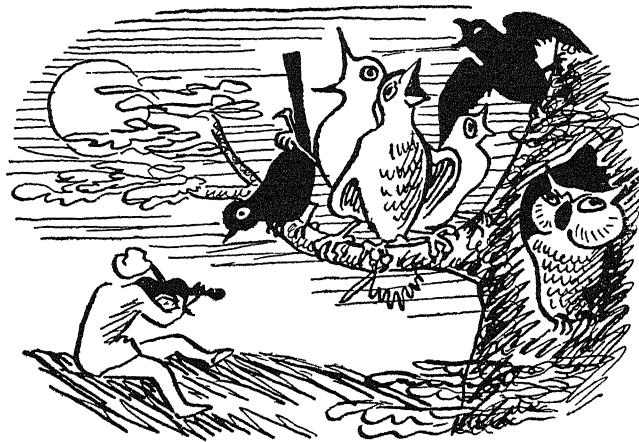
That soci ble h unter of charlock and gorse,
There is no sweeter throat with a melody in it,
Still, *solo* h sings s a m tter of course!

“God forbid th t with drum, corner, triangle, cymbal.

We should drown the wee cherubs assuredly not
Still, y dear sister J ne on the h rp is still nimble,
Nor h v I my old skill with th fiddle forgot....”

So now, as the sun in the West is declining,
The twain to that hill hie, the birds hie there too,
Rings the plucking of harp-strings, the cat-gut's sweet
 pining,
And a chorus *orchestral* ascends in the blue

Besides which, a host of all small kinds of beasties,
(They are shown in the cut, though Miss J ne's out
 of sight),
Having learned the harmonic a marvellous feast is,
Troll out an *Amen* ere they part for the night.



WHY!

“Dear Father, tell me, Why are Worms?”

Tim questioned me; and I—

Mute as a fish, stared on and on

Into the empty sky.

“Father, dear, tell me, *Why* are Worms?”

Tim questioned me Poor me!

In vain, in vain, I gazed, gazed, gazed

Over the vacant sea

“O Father! father! How are Worms?

And When?—and What?—and Where?”

I scanned the mute and wintry blue,

The cloudlets floating there,

I scanned the leafless trees that tossed

Their twiglets in the air,

I marked the rooks and starlings stalk

Up—down the furrows bare,

I passed an unresponsive hand

Over my hatless hair,

But when these eyes encountered Tim’s,

Mine was the emptier stare

SUPPOSE

Suppose the year were but a month,
And that a week,
And that a day
At thought of it I scarce can speak,
The *difference*, I say!
In four-and-twenty hours to see,
Like phantoms in a dream flit by,
Between the smiling earth and sky,
A whole year's birds, flowers, seasons fair,
Packed in a space so small, so spare,
The gross rapidity!
It simply makes my head go round,
It lifts me dizzy from the ground,
The mere idea, *per se*.

PONJOO

My Uncle Jasper in Siam
Once breakfasted on Ponjoo jam
This Ponjoo is a fruit, I find,
That has its pulp outside its rind,
In colour a pale puce
Within it lurks a heart-shaped stone
As hard as granite, iron, or bone,
And round it wells its juice

Now Uncle was a man of fashion
Just visiting Siam;
And when he stripped away the pulp
And took the kernel at a gulp,
He flew into a furious passion
And said the bad word “——!”

The Emperor, whose palace stood
Within the fragrant Ponjoo wood,
Sitting at lattice, stooped and heard

 My uncle use this wicked word,
 And to his menials said.

“Convey that Pagan to a cell
Where never Echo’s voice shall tell
The language that just now befell,
 And there strike off his head ”

And that is why our Family,
At early breakfast, lunch, or tea,
 And I, where’er I am,
If on the table we see laid
A pot of Ponjoo marmalade,
Say, “Drat it,” to the parlourmaid,
 But never “ !”



ODD MAN OUT

“Have you ever fought in a battle, Tom?” Tom stared,
and thought and said,
“Fought in a battle once did I . . . knee-deep in dead. . . .
The sun was downlike—over there; the night’s first
murk was up,
And leaf-still woods was all around. We was c ught-like,
in a cup,
The Regiment gone Just me, and Sam, shoultered
against a stack,
And the Enemy come on in sheaves, and we—we kept
'em back

“I sees their shakoes now—mole-gray; and their faces
scowling—so,
Their mouths a hubbub of shouts and sque ls, a-rocketing
to and fro
They come in droves with bright bare swords—guns was
a coward’s game,
And every head we see—sun-red, we—well—sliced off
the same.
At last Sam says, he says, ‘Fight on! I’m wounded seven
times o’er’.
And I, I says to Sam, ‘That’s me; and s turate with gore’

“Groan, Oh, did we! And the dew dripped down, nd
'undreds and 'undreds still
I sees like grass before the wind come sweeping up that
hill .
I s'pose it were turned half-past-nine, and high nd
starry night,
When me and Sam climbed rduous out, no living soul
in sight.

And I—I dragged Sam's tunic off, Sam did the same by
me,

And we bound up our wounds and broken bones with
strips of hankerchee

“And then we takes a mattock each, a trench—sixteen
by ten—

We dug afore old midnight struck, to bury them poor
men—

Born Dodgers like ourselves, but now, corpses as cold as
clay

’Underd and fifty seven in rows we laid ’em neat away,
And scrabbled back the good leaf mould, and beat it flat
and trim:

And Sam in the moonshine looks at me, and I—I looks
t him

“ ‘I ain’t much shakes at sums,’ he says, ‘but one-five-
seven by two

I reckon leaves one over, Tom Did I kill he—or you?’
Says I, a-smiling soft and meek, ‘The night, lad’s,
getting late,

But if you wants your total, Sam, I *counted* seventy-
eight ” ”

“But did you really, *really*, Tom?” Tom drove deep
down his spade,

“That were Sam’s score, sir. Odd man out I took for
mine,” he said



THE SPECTRE

The moment I glanced at the mirk-windowed mansion
that lifts from the woodlands of Dankacre, Lincs ,
To myself I said softly: "Confide in me, pilgrim, why is
it the heart in your bosom thus sinks"
What's amiss with this region? It's certainly England ,
the moon, there, is rising, and there Vega blinks "

A drear wind sighed bleakly , it soughed in the silence,
it sobbed as if homesick for Knucklebone, Notts. ;
The moons with her mountains showed spectral and
sullen, the corncrake and nightjar craked, jarred,
from their grots,
And aloft from its mistletoe nest in an oak-tree, a
scritch-owlets' scritch froze my blood into clots.

I called on my loved one asleep 'neath the myrtles whose
buds turn to berries in Willowlea, Herts ,
I mused on sweet innocent scenes where in summer the
deer browse, the doves croon, the butterfly darts;
But, alas! these devices proved vain, horror loured, my
terror w s such s no metre imparts

For afar o'er the marshes the booming of bitterns, like
the bitterns that boomed once from Bootle in Lancs ,
Came mingled with wailings from Dowsing and Dudgeon
of se -gulls lamenting o'er Bluddithumbe Banks—
My bowels turned to water; my knees shook, my skin
crept, and the hairs on my cranium rose up in hanks.

And lo! from an attic, there peered out a visage, with
eyes like brass bed-kno&ls and beak like a hawk's,
And it opened the casement, and climbed down the ivy,
with claws like a trollop's, on legs like a stork's,
And I screamed and fled inland, from mansion and moon-
shine, till I saw the sun rising on Pep-y-gent, Yorks

BONES

Said Mr Smith, “I really cannot
Tell you, Dr. Jones—
The most peculiar pain I'm in—
I think it's in my *bones*”.

Said Dr Jones, “Oh, Mr Smith,
That's nothing Without doubt
We have a simple cure for that,
It is to take them out ”

He led forthwith poor Mr Smith
Close-clamped upon the table,
And, cold as stone, took out his bones
As fast as he was able

And Smith said, "Thank you, thank you, *thank you*,"
And wished him a Good-day;
As with his parcel 'neath his arm
He slowly moved away



THE JILT

When, in her shift, poor Delia Swift
 Heard footfall on the stair,
She whispered low into the house
 “Who’s there?”

Her blood stood still from cheek to heel,
 When, softer than a sigh,
Sang in her ear, forlorn and drear,
 “ ’Tis I!”



“What have you come for? Oh, for whom?”
 The quiet stagnant grew
And a voice like the wind in the chimney wailed,
 “For *you*!”

The room fell bitter cold, her bed
Multangulaɪ became, ,
The zig-zag pattern on curtain and w ll
Jigged in the candle flame,
And Delia, now to panic moved,
Mindless of what a jilt she'd proved,
Cried out on all the loves she'd loved,
By name

On—on—she pleaded, vowed, and wept.
She pleaded, wept, in vain
The Spectre catched her, came a lift,
And never seen was she (or shift)
Again

FALSE DAWN

My old friend, Lord O , owned a parcel of land—
A waste of wild dunes, rushes, marran and sand—
With a square Tudor mansion—not a bush, not a tree—
Looking over salt flats a full league to the sea,
And at his demise he bequeathed it to me.

It was dusk as I entered A gull to its mates
Cackled high in the air as I passed through the gates,
And out of the distance—full twenty miles wide—
Came the resonant boom of the incoming tide:
Gulls' scream and groundswell, and nothing beside

In the cold of the porch I tugged at the bell,
Till the bowels of the house echoed back like a knell
I hearkened, then peered through the hole in the lock,
And a voice, cold and clammy, inquired, “Did you
knock?”

And there was Lord O.—in his funeral smock.

In silence he watched me, then led me upstairs
To a room where a table stood, flanked by two chairs,
For light but dip, in an old silver stick,
With guttering grease and a long unsnuffed wick,
And he said, "If you're hungry, eat quick".

So I sipped his cold water and nibbled his bread,
While he gazed softly out from the holes in his head.—
"You would hardly believe, Brown, when once I was
gone,
How I craved for your company—where there is none,
Shivered and craved—on and on.

"This house, I agree, may seem cheerless to you;
But glance from that window! By Gad, what a view!
And think, when we weary of darkness and rats,
We can share the long night with the moon and the bats,
And wander for hours on those flats

"And when in the East creeping daybreak shows wan,
You'll excuse me, I know, if I have to be gone
For s soon as sounds cock-crow, the red and the grey,
It's a rule with us all—even peers must obey—
We all have to hasten away "

So that is my fate now. The small hours draw near,
We shall stalk arm-in-arm in that scenery drear;
Tête-à-tête by blanched breakers discuss on and on
If it's better to be flesh and blood or mere bone,
Till it's time for Lord O. to be gone.

Yet, doubtless he means well I would not suggest
To shun peers with property always is best
But insomnia, nightmare, tic-douloureux, cramp,
Have reduced me to what's little short of a scamp;
For I've hung in my hen-roost a very large lamp.
And now, well, at least four full hours before day,
Lord O., he hears cock-crow, the red and the grey,
Sighs, stares at the ocean—and hastens away.

THE JOLLIES

The Captain, he said to his Passenger, “ ’Twill- be Full
Moon to-night,
And at Six Bells sharp, by yon transom and the trucks'
the Jollies will heave in sight,
And if I was a man and a Christian as would deign for to
cargo be,
I’d scuttle to my cabin and I’d down and say my prayers,
for the Jollies is a sight to see!”

The Passenger looked at the Captain, his cheek grey,
green, and white,
And he stuttered at the scuppers, “Oh, thank you, Cap-
tain Stingo, I should much enjoy the sight”;
Then descended, like cold suet, to his cabin, and sate in
the dusk on his bunk,
And (if the English language here admitted of it) he
thunk and thunk and *thunk*

And at Five Bells sharp of that there Middle Watch, that
ship she gave a lurch,
With a noise like the falling of a steeple with all that
hangs inside it on a church
And the Passenger ran like a rabbit, his whiskers stiff as
bristles on his cheek,
And he peered with his eyes above the binnacle, and he
hadn't very far for to seek.

For to larboard and to starboard was the Jollies—wan,
green waves mountain-high,
All silvery and haggard, and a-roaring and a-screaming
under the pitch-black sky,
Boiling like a pot full of snow-bright broth with a rim full
nine miles wide,
And the green Moon gloated on the Passenger, while he
stared at the Jollies—and cried

And the Captain, he said to the helmsman, “One course
I’ve ever took,
And that breast-forward, like R. Browning in the poem;
so keep her by the book”
And the Captain, he said to his Passenger, “Look around,
and you’ll agree,
There seems to be a Jonah stowed away aboard this vessel;
and by Davy, thou beest he!”

And the Passenger, now past hollering, from his waistcoat
took his fountain pen,
And wrote, “I leave the all I have to Stingo, kindest and
best of men”.
And Stingo, having long since a conviction that where
there’s a Will there’s a Way,
Stood a-smilin’ and a-smilin’ till the ship was on her beam
ends, and then he yelled, “Belay!”

“Good-bye,” he sobbed, “my *dear* Mr Robinson, it’s sad
to think that parting is so near,
I hoped you might be staying on to breakfast, no ch nce
of that, I fear”
And the Bo’sun piped shrill upon his whistle, and four-
foot-thick A B
Just lifted Mr Robinson as gently as a babby, and
dropped him into the sea



And a Mermaid swimming quiet by the combings, where
the keelson hawse-pipe yares,
Inwedged him to her bosom like a porpoise at its we nning,
and soothed away his cares,
And Stingo, thus bereft of Mr Robinson, yelled, “Ho,
there, lay her by!
For by Davy and by Golly she’s a match for any Jolly,
and there’s Rum for them that’s dry!”

THE PRETENDER

In the green of the wilds of Seringapatam
Is the haunt of an ancient redoubtable ram,
With sharp-pointed horns on its head,
When it snuffs out a Brahmin it scoops with its hooves,
Till the jungle around it is jungle in grooves,
And then it pretends to be dead

O White Man beware of such tactics as these,
For if in compassion thou sink to thy knees,
All thought of mere safety forgot,
With a jerk of its horns the fell creature comes to,
And smiles, as if saying, "Ah, friend, is it you?"
When there's none to reply, "It is not."

AHKH

At full moon in cold Kh mchatka,
Where the Wheelagheelah flows,
That aquatic fowl, the Vhatk ,
Softly tippets on its toes
(Inebriate with her love-light,
I suppose).
It is then the astut Khamchatkan
Fowling goes.

But whe her dwindling quarter
H s to dark her disc resigned,
'Tis job, by Gob, to slaughter
A fowl no eye can find—
And his "Ahk", his "Ahk" is nothing
But a blind.

Now it's nearer, sweeter, clearer,
Now it wails and wanes and dies;
Now the night-beleaguered hearer
Hears it *ahkhing* in the skies,
When, in sooth, it's nesting snugly in a nest
not half its size,
Hidden in the reeds and rushes, scarce a hand's-
breadth from his eyes!



So the Fowler should go fowling,
Armed with candle, book, and bell,
When Khamchatka's gleamy crescent
Casts a beamy, dreamy spell
O'er a forest vaguely pleasant
With the Oomatonga's smell,
And for leagues around him amorous "*Ahkh's!*"
Cacophonously swell
With luck he'll bag a Vhatka!
Who can tell?



GOAT

Leaving his cave secure and tidy,
See Crusoe, with his trusty Friday—
While low in heaven the crescent floats—
Have sallied out in search of goats
In skins, close skewered, Robinson,
His Pretty Poll perched thumb upon,
And shag umbrella to the skies—
Since dews descend when mists arise—
Is treading soft as soft can be
The track his black can plainly see,
Whose round and glaring eyes, you'll mark,
Were no less useful in the dark

Now, more in joy than wonderment,
Man Friday is on knee down-bent,
And with an unmistak hand
Points to the hoof-prints in the sand
It's likely they will lead at last

To where, replete from his repast,
On ground, which looks a little hilly,
An unsuspecting handsome Billy,
With calm and pensive bearded face,
Awaits the huntsmen and the chase

See, cloud has dimmed the moonbeams wan—
'Tis Fortune's self now leads them on!
Good sport to you, brave Robinson!
Where'er you fare, or how, or whoso,
A thumping bag, beloved Crusoe!
And when goat's bubbling in the pot,
All weariness by F forgot,
May man and master hob-a-nob,
With Puss a-purring on the hob,
While for his share of s pper-meat
Shrieks the bedizened parakeet

AH, MOMOTOMBO!

Ah, Momotombo, would I might
Thy distant mountains scan!
Were green Managua's groves in sight—
• How pleasing then life's plan!

Atlas in hand, I watch and wake,
Pining to hear the billows break
On Desolado's shore.
Sweet were to me their wild refrain—
A deep, a sad, a solemn strain—
They'd roar it o'er and o'er

Alas! 'tis not my fate to roam,
Not *there* for me is hearth, heath, home,
I stay but where I am
Yet never sighs the halcyon breeze
That tells not of thy tim-tam trees,
The yookoos in thy yams,
Thy merry little chickadees,
And clutemnacious clams

I sleep, I creep where, fathoms deep,
El Paraiso flows;
Exultant climb at morning-prime
Tegucigalpa's snows
With dream-tranced eyes I watch the flies
Cloud inland, rank on rank.
Borne on the breeze that thrills the seas
That sweep with ease the Caribees,
They swarm with parched proboscides,
Protruding eyes and folded knees,
Athwart Mosquito Bank

Alas! sweet Momotombo—and
Solentiname's Isle!
But though my grief is past relief,
And innocent of guile,
Whene'er, with open Gazetteer,
My own enchanting voice I hear
Lispings in accents shrill and clear—
“Agguapadalpo, Yali, Za—
catacoluca, Paundma,
Chalatenango ”—well, la, la!
I *can't* refrain a smile

FOXES

Old Dr Cox's
Love of foxes
Led his steps astray,
He'd haunt the woods and coppices,
And lure the beasts away,
Into a bright green private park,
In safety there to *stay*

Now Dr Cox's
Dodge with foxes
Was simple as could be,
For first of all he'd find an earth,
And mark it with a T
(Just T for Trapper), then he'd wait
Till dusk, just wait and see.

For Dr Cox's
Way with foxes
Needed but a *hush*;
When seated on a bank of loam,
Beneath a tree or bush,
He'd tootle-ootle on a comb,
And each would bring its brush



QUICKELS

The Quickel-fish a-quiver in Parana-tinga river never
shiver when they hear the shrill "A-veisse!"
Of the brave to his old squaw, as he pads on muffled paw,
up the slopes bestrown with porphyry and gneiss,
For they see the rose a-blowing, hear the paddles to-and-
froing, and they know that's quite impossible in ice

But when mute upon the mountains fall the well-springs
and the fountains, where the chamois o'er the
glacier nimbly sports,
When through snow-embowered crevasses gallop squad-
rons of wild asses, seeking herbage 'mid the jasper
and the quartz,
Ah then, ah then, alas! their haunts congeal like glass—
gelidified to crystal are their courts

O brief, sweet day thus ended! In a marvellous trance
suspended, they shine like gouts of gold in shimmer-
ing ore—
Like frozen clots of light, amber, opal, malachite—while
their turquoise eyes in terror scan the shore,
For like cats come Indians stalking, sounds a baleful
tomahawking, they chop them out in blocks—and
thirst for more!

THE LION-HUNTER

The lion-hunter is a man
Who lives to hunt the lion,
He'd gladly hunt him might and main,
Through France and Portugal and Spain,
And back to old Albion

But where there 's Negroes is the place
The sun shines hot and dry on—
'Tis there, with spy-glass to his eye,
He takes his camp-stool, no one by,
And spies about—and spies about—just spies about for
lion

Yes, there he sits, with hat on head—
The only hat he'd try on—
His hat (I mean) of pith with peaks,
And flaps, both sides, to shield the cheeks,
Wherein he hunts the lion

From one oasis to the next,
He packs his bag to hie on,
And sometimes his pyjamas share
That bag with hanks of tawny hair—
And these were once—yes, these were once—yes, these
were once a lion

Perchance, at last, this happy man
Will hunt his way to Zion—
With a golden harp and most beautiful wings
To play on and to fly on
But now and again when the music's done,
He'll hie to some nook of sand and sun,
And there you'll find him (with his gun)
Colloquing with a lion



QUACK-HUNTING

When evening's darkening azure
 Stains the water crystal clear,
It's a marvellous sweet pleasure
 A small coracle to steer
To where, in reeds and rushes,
 •Squeak and chuckle, sup and suck
A multitudinous company

Of Duck

Not mine the dismal fowling-piece,
 The *living* duck for me!
I strow upon the water crumbs
 Which they, that instant, see,
They paddle in like steamboats, with
 Their tails behind their backs,
And I? I simply sit and count

Their quacks

There silver-shining Hesper
 Smiles at Mars—a solemn red,
The myriads of the Milky Way
 Are circling overhead,
But even though the dusk's too dim
 To sheen their wings—with luck
I catch those button eyes and know

They're Duck

One sigh in that great silence—
 Wild-winged creatures, they'd be gone,
But me—I scarcely breathe, I don't,
 But softly sidle on,
And while the dears are feeding, with
 Their tails behind their backs,
I make my nightly score, I count

Their quacks.

MARCH HARES

“The best way to go”, said my muffled-up friend, “is to look in its *form* for a Hare, you know”,
So, with gun over shoulder, we sallied out early, the bushes all hunched up with snow, you know, The dawn was still under the eastern horizon, and O but the morning was rare, you know, The elms and the oaks were a-dangle with ice, that swayed in the breeze to and fro, you know— Icicles half a yard long at the least, that tinkled and rang in the air, you know; “A marvellous music,” said I to my friend, and he, he never said, No, you know.

The snow had been falling for days, there were drifts full fifteen feet deep, and so fair, you know, Aurora herself might have looked to her blushes, and Cupid have trimmed up his bow, you know, And when o'er the rim of the World came the Sun, and with eye like a topaz did glare, you know, We stood for a while as if blinded with Paradise, dumb in that wonderful glow, you know, We coughed, and we shifted our guns, and went on—no more than a cough could we dare, you know, For moment by moment we couldn't tell where we should come within sight of the foe, you know

And, all of a sudden, my friend, he said, “ ’Ssh!” And I looked and I listened, and there, you know— Not half a shot off, with his ears and his scut, acrouch in the lily-white snow, you know, And his eyes like two blazing bright marbles of glass—sat staring and glaring a Hare, you know!

The sun it shone brighter, the blue it grew bluer, the
heavens like an infinite O, you know,
And a breeze out of nowhere rang sweet as a bell rings,
and stirred in our whiskers and hair, you know.

My friend—then—he up—with—his gun—to—his
shoulder—and tugged at the trigger but lo' you
know,

In his kindness of heart he'd forgotten to load, for for
slaughter he didn't much care, you know,

We laughed, oh! laughed we, and my ghost! if old Watt
didn't up with his nose and cry, "Ho!" you know,
And stamped for his brothers and sisters to come, and
they hopped up in scores from their lair, you know.

They danced, they fandangoed, they scuttered, they sang,
turned somersaults, leapfrogged, and so, you know,
We trudged back to breakfast with nothing to jug, which
wasn't *exacaly* fair, you know,

Which *wasn't* *exacaly* fair



WEA

If I were the Beadle of Weston Weaton,
A happy old Beadle I'd be,
Sitting up there in my two-pair-back,
Looking out on the deep blue sea;
While a bellying cloud on the West Wind comes
And splashes my scarlet geraniums,
And the honey-bee hums,
As I twiddle my thumbs
And smile at the gables of Wea

If I were the Beadle of Weston Weaton,
I'd have a stuffed dog in a case,
A woolly-haired, brown, retriever dog,
With amber eyes in his face
Under the picture of widgeons he'd stand,
Looking into the parlour, mute and bland,
On fine yaller sand,
Stuffed by Indy Shand,
10, High Street, Weston Wea

As soon as my Birthday (June 9) came round
I'd give all the children a treat—
Infants like angels at tables on trestles,
While flags blazing out in the street,
Cherries and gingerpop, buns and plum-cake,
While their little hearts break,
As my way I'd take,
Smiling and bowing through Wea!

On Sundays I'd sprightly step off to the Kirk—
Neat pepper-and-salt, in tweed,

With a springside boot, silk cravat at my throat,
Stiff collar—intoning the Creed
With the ladies and little tots all in a row,
I'd troll out the hymmums and Psalms, and throw
A languishing glow
On a widow I know—
Mrs James, of the *Chequers*, in Wea.

And I'd thank my stars, as I climbed the stairs,
I was born in the parish of Wea,
Where the Burghers are solid respectable folk,
And the Lord of the Manor's a Ffeogh,
And me be angry with Edward Lear
For his Cheadle limerick?—Lor, no fear!
I'd toast him, I know it,
For a man and a poet,
If I were the Beadle of Wea



WITCHCRAFT

A parson I knew in the village of Eard—
Himself like a solemn bespectacled bird—

Had a witchcraft I've never seen beat,
For attracting around him small creatures with wings,
Whatsoever on earth hops, nests, flutters and sings,
Would flit at his call to his feet

A whistled decoy-note, and out there would hie,
From the tops of his trees, stables, chimneypots, sky,
A host of small birds, and, all twittering, come,
Not in hope of cheese, fat, worms, seed, water or crumb,
But merely for joy of himself, and to share
In the open of heaven his company there.

I've sat with my friend in the twilight and seen
The whimbrels at play in the glim,
And owls large and small hooting out of the green,
And it seemed they were calling to him
And he'd sidle his head o'er his book, and you knew
That its print now said naught but Too-whit and to-hoo.
And it couldn't say sweeter to him.

And often, with candle in hand, he has said,
As we climbed up the staircase to go off to bed,
"I like, Jones, to think they'll sing on when I'm dead
And wherever I happen to be,
Should it chance but an echo of music should come
Such as now I delight in, I'll post away home—
I couldn't resist it, you see.

"Besides, Jones, a secret", he muttered it low,
In the gleam his round spectacles all of a glow,



“Soft down’s on my shoulder-blades sprouting, I vow,
And even the primaries stirring, and so,
 The flight will come easy to me!”
With a chuckle he clutched at my elbow, and I—
 I confess I was bound to agree

So we laid him to rest where, in green month of May,
A group of young hawthorns would sweeten the day,
 And there, if you happen to pass,
You will hear morn and evening, and middle-day too,
The wild birds lamenting the friend they all knew;
 And even when midnight’s o’erhead,
In the midst of the may-blossom—silent as snow—
When all throats are hushed, sobs a voice sweet with woe—
 The nightingale’s voice, it is said

FINIS

This Mouse is here
(As the cut makes clear),
For to prove, whatsoever else fails,
That Providence sends
The mite *two* ends—
The tip of his snout and his tail's



